
IRISH STUDIES IN SPAIN

The Year in Review – 2016

Marisol Morales-Ladrón (ed.)

Copyright (c) 2017 by the authors. This text may be archived and redistributed both in electronic form and in hard copy, provided that the author and journal are properly cited and no fee is charged for access.

Introduction

Marisol Morales-Ladrón198

Ex-sistere: Women's Mobility in Contemporary Irish, Welsh and Galician Literatures
María Jesús Lorenzo-Modia (ed.)

Luz Mar González-Arias.....200

Words of Crisis, Crisis of Words. Ireland and the Representation of Critical Times
María Losada-Friend, Auxiliadora Perez-Vildes, and Pilar Ron-Vaz (eds)

Beatriz Rubio-Martínez203

Family and Dysfunction in Contemporary Narrative and Film
Marisol Morales-Ladrón (ed.)

Pilar Villar-Argáiz206

Traducciones

M^a Yolanda Fernández Suárez (tr. and ed.)

Ana M^a Terrazas-Calero210

Introduction

Marisol Morales-Ladrón

Last March 2016, only a month after the Irish government had lost the elections – a coalition formed by Fine Gael and the Labour party – a survey conveyed by a Eurobarometer placed the Irish people as the most optimistic in Europe, for they held a strong confidence in the future. In spite of the parallel plights between Ireland and Spain, in their endeavours to deal with deadlock mandates, such judgement seems fair in retrospect. It took the Irish only two months to negotiate a way out of such crisis, forming a minority government with the re-elected Fine Gael *Taoiseach* Enda Kenny, who managed to pact with the historically rival party Fianna Fáil. Certainly, a much shorter span of time than the eleven paralysed months of the Spanish acting political administration.

On a wider scale, the state of affairs of most European governments, and I even dare say of the whole world, could only probably be described with the term “instability”, to say the least. From the refugee crises and the homeless families, the raise of racism and intolerance, the endless terrorist tragedies or the menace of ISIS, to the Brexit, the awakening of reactionary forms of leadership, social turmoil and convulsion, the year 2016 has been gauged in general terms by the struggle to find peace and stability. For some commentators, this could be seen as the preamble of a darker age in which the upsurge of populism, large-scale social alarms and a lack of democratic skills to properly manage countries are being fostered. For others, this second decade of the new millennium is silently paving the way for the emergence of a new order that will rule the world in the next generations with outcomes that have not been foreseen yet.

In the context of Ireland, a nation defined by its own historical contradictions, two relevant and divergent events deserve to be mentioned. On the one hand, the first anniversary celebrations of the passing of the marriage equality referendum in Dublin Castle at the end of May, which brought together politicians, newly married couples and supporters of the campaign to commemorate such a success for progress and social freedom. On the other, only three months later, a young woman and her friend live twitted their journey to the UK to have an abortion, turning the issue not only viral in social networks but also achieving an unprecedented media coverage. The following month, at the end of September, thousands of people marched the streets of Dublin to advocate the repeal of the Eighth Amendment of the Irish Constitution and defended the right of women to have safe and legal abortions in Ireland, claiming that the actual law endangers both the health of women and their rights to take decisions on their own bodies, while it lawfully protects the life of the unborn child. Finally, on another note, education has also been a source of tension and disruption in Ireland over the last few months with secondary schools strikes, organised by the ASTI (Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland), due to a lack of agreement with the Government over lower pay wages for new teachers and the working of extra hours.

However, by far, the most important event in the country has been the commemoration of the centenary of the Easter Rising, with an impressive and wide array of events covering all fields of political, social and academic life, including exhibitions, official remembrances, theatrical plays, publications and even a parade through Dublin city. Significantly, Lia Mill’s novel *Fallen* (2014), set against the backdrop of the First World War and the Easter Rising, was chosen to celebrate the “One City, One Book Festival”, which was renamed as “Dublin-Belfast, Two Cities, One book”, in an attempt to sound more inclusive and conciliatory. The

celebrations have also been seconded outside the country with Irish Embassies, Consulates, Culture Ireland and partners joining their forces to mark such an emblematic stage for Irish independence. In the case of Spain, within the Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme, there was a transmission broadcasted live in Madrid of a special event that took place in the National Concert Hall in Dublin: a documentary on the Rising produced by the University of Notre Dame that had its Gala screening on March and counted with the attendance of President Michael D. Higgins.

As regards the most significant cultural accomplishments, the successes of two literary films deserve to be mentioned. On the one hand, John Crowley's adaptation of Colm Tóibín's novel *Brooklyn* – with screenplay by Nick Hornby – was nominated for three Academy Awards – Best picture, Actress and Screenplay –, won an award at the Baftas for the Best British film and two others at the Irish Film and Television Awards for the Best Actress in a leading role – Saoirse Ronan – and the Best supporting actress – Jane Brennan. On the other, Lenny Abrahamson's adaptation of Emma Donoghue's *Room*, also won further awards at the Irish Film and Television Awards, including that of Best Film, three Academy Awards nominations for Best Picture, Director and Actress, and the protagonist, actress Brie Larson, received multiple awards, including the Bafta, the Golden Globe and the Screen Actors Guild Award.

Moving now on to activities organized in Spain around Irish subjects, we need to mention the participation of the Embassy of Ireland in the organization of a wide variety of events, including traditional music and dance with *Púca Óg* – a folk band based in Madrid – an interactive workshop with the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), drama performances and dramatized readings of “The Dead” by members of both The Bloomsday and Yeats Societies, and the performance of Irish tenor Ross Scanlon and pianist David O'Shea, from the repertoire of the renowned Irish musician John McCormack. Also, for the second year, last March, the St. Patrick's Family Fun Day was organized in Madrid with activities including Irish sport, music, dance, storytelling and theatre. Additionally, the annual Bloomsday celebrations across Spain brought major events that took place in different towns, with some of Ireland's leading Joycean interpreters, such as actors Paul O'Hanrahan and Cathal Stephens, or singers Darina Gallagher and Sinead Murphy.

Within the field of Irish Studies in Spain, our annual International AEDEI Conference, which has run now for fifteen editions, was successfully hosted in Zaragoza last May by Constanza del Río, with the general title of “Revolution/Evolution/Involution in Twentieth- and Twenty-first-Century Ireland”, which evoked the Easter Rising 1916 and its manifestations in the revolutionary decade of 1913 to 1923. Fulfilling the multidisciplinary approach of all AEDEI conferences, the contributions covered a variety of fields of study including those of history, sociology, music, literature, art, culture, language and politics. Keynote lectures were pronounced by Declan Kiberd (University of Notre Dame), Gerardine Meaney (UCD) and Maureen O'Connor (UCC). Additionally, two invited artists completed the programme: Vukasin Nedeljkovic, a visual artist and PhD candidate at the Centre for Transcultural Research and Media Practice at Dublin Institute of Technology; and performance poet from Galway Sarah Clancy.

As regards publications, translations of Irish works into Spanish have also proliferated. Last September, the translation of Brian Friel's emblematic *Translations*, by AEDEI member Yolanda Fernández Suárez, was launched at the Irish Embassy in collaboration with the Asociación de Directores de Escena de España. A month later, the translation of Edna O'Brien's *The Little Chairs*, as *Las sillitas rojas*, by Regina López Muñoz, was presented in the “Tipos infames” Bookshop in Madrid sponsored by its publishing house Errata naturae; an event that was attended by the author herself, who answered questions at the end. Finally, the Centro Dramático Nacional coproduced *Mármol* (*Marble*, 2009) last November, the first of

Marina Carr's works to be translated into Spanish, by Marta I. Moreno and Antonio C. Guijosa. Premiered in the Teatro Valle-Inclán, and directed by A. C. Guijosa, the play could be seen until the end of December, with actors and actresses José Luis Alcobendas, Elena González, Susana Hernández and Pepe Viyuela.

Given such a productive year for Irish studies in Spain, I can only conclude this section adding that it does not surprise that the academia has also contributed its own share with three book collections and one translation that will be reviewed in the following pages.

Marisol Morales-Ladrón is Senior lecturer at the University of Alcalá (Spain). Her areas of research include contemporary Irish literature, gender studies and the interrelationship between literature and psychology. She has written the books *Breve introducción a la literatura comparada* (1999) and *Las poéticas de James Joyce y Luis Martín-Santos* (2005). She has edited the volumes *Postcolonial and Gender Perspectives in Irish Studies* (2007) and *Family and Dysfunction in Contemporary Irish Narrative and Film* (2016), and has also co-edited the monograph *Glocal Ireland: Current Perspectives on Literature and the Visual arts* (2011), as well as two studies on feminist criticism: *Mosaicos y taraceas: Desconstrucción feminista de los discursos del género* (2000) and *(Trans)formaciones de las sexualidades y el género* (2001). She has published articles on a variety of English and Irish authors, which have appeared in peer-reviewed journals. At present, she serves as Vice-President for Academic and Student Affairs at the University of Alcalá and has held previous positions as Head of Department, Director of Academic Affairs, Chair of AEDEI, and executive member of the Boards of several national and international associations.

Ex-sistere: Women's Mobility in Contemporary Irish, Welsh and Galician Literatures.

María Jesús Lorenzo-Modia (ed.)

Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.

ISBN: 978-1-4438-8700-7

223 pages

Reviewer: **Luz Mar González-Arias**

The relationship between gender and movement has always been an intriguing one. The classical trope of the voyage – epitomised by Homer's *Odyssey* – has been countlessly re-enacted in world literatures of all times, as well as in endless examples taken from contemporary popular culture. The man that embarks on an adventure towards faraway lands – this being a metaphor for self-discovery or the realisation of his desire to expand his mind with new languages and cultures – is often accompanied by the image of the woman who waits and waits and waits for him like a dutiful Penelope. This well-established plotline is inevitably linked to the traditional association of women with the domestic sphere, and men with the public, and very active, realm of the outside world. However, contemporary writing and historiography are clearing a space for the inscription and/or recovery of the active role women have played in different patterns of mobility all over the world. *Ex-sistere: Women's Mobility in Contemporary Irish, Welsh and Galician Literatures* is part of that collective “journey” to put women's names – real and imaginary – on the map of mobility, adventure, artistic exile and/or forced emigration, with a strong presence of the literary representations of female mobility (in poetry, narrative and drama) but also including interesting essays that fuse the (auto)biographical, the creative and the scholarly. The volume focuses on authors writing about or coming from three different geographical areas – Ireland (both the Republic and

Northern Ireland), Wales and Galicia – that share quite a lot of common ground in their historical frameworks: economic depressions, rural environments, marginal positions with regards to a supposedly superior centre, migration as a familiar social pattern, bilingual scenarios, Atlantic identities, the proximity of water, similar weather.

The book opens with María López Sánchez's essay, which offers an informative overview of migration in Galician literature and the role women played in it (providing the necessary historical background to help us contextualise the artistic output). The second part of this chapter focuses on women's contribution to that theme, with emphasis on the important presence of the myth of Penelope in Galician poetry written by women. Xohana Torres' famous line "Eu tamén navegar" [I too wish to navigate], uttered by a Penelope that desires to participate in what had traditionally been a male domain, perfectly summarises the historical and artistic reasons for the continuing employment of this classical myth in Galicia.

María Xesús Nogueira Pereira introduces us into the almost generalised use of foreign toponymy in the work of recent Galician women poets. Apart from offering a very exhaustive and helpful list of works and poets, Nogueira's essay effectively reflects on the connection between the poets' biographies and the incorporation of foreign place names to their work. Poetry has tended to be read autobiographically, which has often triggered misleading and also limited interpretations of the texts. However, in this case, knowing what the existential experience of travel (often connected with artistic realisation and professional aspirations) has been for the poets in question does add a necessary layer of information in our way towards interpretation.

The last two essays in the Galician section cross boundaries in very suggestive ways. Olivia Rodríguez-González's piece analyses the narrative of Eva Moreda and locates it in the tradition of novels about emigration in the Galician context, whereas Xesús Fraga offers us an (auto)biographical text about two women emigrants from his own family. Both essays link Galicia and London in what becomes an interesting by-passing of the dominant peninsular identity (and language) to connect instead with a European geography and with the English language. The latter essay is particularly interesting in its autobiographical and creative components, as it illustrates how much information about the collective memory/history of a community can be extracted from the individual stories of a single family.

The Irish section opens with an essay by José Francisco Fernández on the presence of Spain, Galicia and Ireland in the work of English novelist and travel writer Honor Tracy, a "minor literary figure", in Fernández's words, who would remain unknown to most of us were not for essays such as this. Fernández's work introduces Tracy's biographical information before summarising all the prejudices and colonial mentality that seem to be hidden behind her perceptions of the three geographical areas she visits. The writer's constant use of stereotypes and the feeling of superiority in her approach to Spain and Ireland necessarily position her as the kind of narrow-minded and prejudiced traveller who is the victim of her particular historical context and social class, all of which offers an interesting contrast with the emigrant writing analysed in the rest of the essays of this edited collection.

Two are the essays that deal with mobility in a Northern Irish context. Gómez Penas and Fraga Fuentes focus on identity in Christina Reid's play *Tea in a China Cup*. Although the essay deals with emigration only partially, it does touch upon the specificities of Northern Irish women's trials and tribulations given the sectarian society they are brought up in and how this impinges on their experiences of going into exile. María Jesús Lorenzo-Modia's piece deals with one of Northern Ireland's most reputed poets, Medbh McGuckian, and her resistance to the common pattern of leaving Belfast behind during The Troubles. Lorenzo-Modia close-reads some of McGuckian's poems to conclude that the so-called "obscurity" in her work is one of the consequences of her no-migration, i.e., a way of writing poetry that

facilitates the necessary distance from where to deal with the political conflict going on at home.

Manuela Palacios González's contribution gathers texts by contemporary Irish women poets and novelists who write about the experiences of migrant women from their own families. The reflections are triggered in all cases by photographic records. The writers' texts fuse the biographical and the historical with personal interpretation. The final part of the piece is Palacios González's reading of the texts in light of literary criticism on mobility. At a time when migration is relevant in Ireland again due to the death of the Celtic Tiger phenomenon, and when discourses on political refugees and economic migrants mix with the narrative of professional mobility of younger generations of Europeans, Palacios González goes back to the private – and often lonely – experience of migrating to the US and England in the first half of the 20th century, adding the gender perspective. The effect of this on the reader is, inevitably, to create empathic links between the ordeals of present-day migrants and those endured by the women of Ireland in the not-so-distant past.

The final part of the edited collection is devoted to Welsh literature. This is the shortest section, with only two essays in it. Hybridity and generational gaps are tackled in Kevin Mills' essay on Nikita Lalwani's novel *Gifted*. Indian identities and Welsh realities are juxtaposed in the novel and Mills' assessment touches upon the differences between first and second generation migrants in their approach to landscape, language and social codes. This essay is particularly interesting in its representation of diasporic characters that come from outside Europe (India in this case) and hence problematise white European identity in various ways. The volume ends with a beautiful and lyric piece by poet Chris Kinsey, where, once more, the boundaries between the analytical, the poetic and the autobiographical are crossed. The essay associates mobility and exploration with the connection between the poet and the natural environment that surrounds her. Exploring is equivalent to becoming familiar with the flora and the fauna of her area and with a constant desire to be in the proximity of water. The essay can be framed within the eco-critical turn but it is, most of all, a reflection on how the poetic imagination of a child can be fostered by the everyday and small mobilities that connect us to the natural world.

For many of the contributors this volume is one of the results of their (very productive) ongoing research in the comparative analysis of contemporary Irish and Galician women's literature. For this occasion, the scope of the study includes Wales as well, and one would hope that in the future it might also be expanded to Scotland in order to account for the points of similarity and divergence in the literary representations of all the Atlantic communities of Europe. All in all, *Ex-sistere* is a thought-provoking volume and, given the heterogeneous and inexhaustible nature of the experience of mobility, one would hope that this research team would continue working on this fertile area.

Luz Mar González-Arias is Senior Lecturer in the English Department, University of Oviedo. Her research is primarily in the areas of body theory and Medical Humanities, as applied to the work of contemporary Irish women poets. Embodiment and sexuality feature prominently in her two published books: *Otra Irlanda [Another Ireland]* (2000), and her study of the myth of Adam and Eve in recent Irish Women's Writing (1999), which draws heavily on the theme of anorexia and female identity. Her publications include a chapter on Ireland in *The Routledge Companion to Postcolonial Studies* (edited John McLeod), and an essay on the versions of Sheela-na-gigs in the poetry of Susan Connolly in the volume *Opening the Field* (edited by Christine St. Peter and Patricia Haberstroh). She has also contributed to the Special Issue that *An Sionnach* dedicated to Paula Meehan (edited by Jody Allen-Randolph) with an essay on citified embodiments in Meehan's urban poetry. Her most

recent publication are: “Much More than a Colour: *YELLOW*, or the Signifying Potential of the non-Verbal”; her essay in *I’ll Sing You a Song from around the Town*, the new book-catalogue on Amanda Coogan’s artistic practice; and “‘A pedigree bitch, like myself’: (Non)Human Illness and Death in Dorothy Molloy’s Poetry”, in *Animals in Irish Literature and Culture* (Palgrave, 2015). She is the editor of *National Identities and Imperfections in Contemporary Irish Literature: Unbecoming Irishness* (Palgrave, November 2016); and is currently working on two projects: a book-length monograph on the life and poetry of Dorothy Molloy, and a volume of essays on Celia de Fréine’s work, which she is co-editing with Lucy Collins.

Words of Crisis, Crisis of Words. Ireland and the Representation of Critical Times.

María Losada-Friend, Auxiliadora Perez-Vildes, and Pilar Ron-Vaz (eds.)

Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.

ISBN(10): 1-4438-8887-7

ISBN(13): 978-1-4438-8887-5

254 pages

Reviewer: **Beatriz Rubio Martínez**

Words of Crisis, Crisis of Words is a comprehensive and exhaustive collection of articles dealing with the different manifestations of crises and adversities that developed throughout Irish History and a wide variety of reactions and expressions linked to them. Ireland, having had to endure long periods of deep suffering and turmoil throughout its history, is now forced to confront a wide range of challenges. Among them, a new political and social plight, and the reconstruction of the perpetually evolving concept of Irishness as part of an ever-changing continent and Ireland’s supposed place in it. This collection of studies covers an abundance of topics, periods and different fields of knowledge, which collectively deals with how Ireland has faced or is facing crises, understanding crises through political, social, economic or personal events. Due to the intrinsic complexity and variety of these topics, the scope of this study, as a whole, might appear to be too broad, but, as the reader progresses through the compilation of articles, a more developed and concise idea of the links between these different pieces of work becomes apparent.

In order to properly cover the varied representations of crisis, the book is divided in eight different parts, each of them clearly focusing on one specific topic. The first part, entitled “Fool Moon”, is a brief narrative piece by writer Peter Cunningham, which works as a literary opening. Through the intertwining of reflexions, oneiric observations and images, Cunningham symbolically relates Ireland and the Middle East. This first and surprisingly resonating comparison holds important significance throughout the book as the issue of Ireland dealing with immigrants and a new more inclusive idea of Irishness is recurrently discussed.

The second part studies the crisis through two different genres: autobiography and cinema. In the first article, Christina Hunt Mahony discusses the “prejudicial attitude toward autobiography” (8), a genre that seems to have always been in crisis. The author studies Irish autobiography in terms of two influences: on the one hand, a more egocentric, personal type of writing, traditionally related to the English writing tradition of autobiographies, and, on the other, a tradition deriving from the Irish vernacular language, more focused on portraying the character within a community and a context (9). It is interesting to see that, through the analysis of autobiographies by authors such as W. B. Yeats, Luis MacNiece, Elizabeth Bowen, William Trevor, Julia O’Faoláin, or Kate O’Brien, among others, Hunt Mahony

remarks on how the writers are persistently concerned with their own Irishness, highlighting the significance it acquires to them, with Seamus Heaney being one of the few who seemed to evade the topic. Rosa González Casademont discusses how the current times are portrayed in Irish cinema, paying special attention to *The Tiger's Tall* (Boorman 2006) and *The Guard* (McDonagh 2011). The audience's preference for films, such as those most recently released that have succeeded in Irish cinema, which exhibit elements of Irish culture and character from a humoristic and satirical perspective, seem to prove that rather than rejecting any film that openly deals with unpleasant realities, Irish audiences prefer a comic vision of the state of the nation, "without resorting to didacticism" (26). Irish people's attraction for facing life from a satirical perspective will be discussed further on in the book (in the sixth and eighth parts, respectively) as a recurring way of confronting crises.

The third part, which seems to constitute one of the most thematically consistent sections of the book, deals with the Troubles in Northern Ireland from three very different perspectives. On the one hand, the alternative Ulster portrayed by John T. Davis in the film *Shellshock Rock* (1978) that provided a very unpredictably accurate image of Northern Ireland through the Ulster punk movement, which is thoroughly analysed by Beatriz Kopschitz Bastos. On the other, the meta-national identity present in modern Irish novels which, unlike postcolonial narratives, confronts the previously accepted ideas of nationalism and Irishness, an issue tackled by Shahriyar Mansouri. To close the section, we have the analysis of Deidre Madden's novels, some of them clearly related to the Troubles in Northern Ireland, according to the author Marisol Morales-Ladrón, while others are more focused on creativity and the role of art and the artist, being *Molly Fox's Birthday* (2008) the only novel which brings both issues together.

The fourth part of this volume deals with the crisis in Ireland from a domestic perspective. Asier Altuna-García de Salazar studies Dorothy Nelson's fiction in which we find the depiction of dysfunctional families, shattered by violence, alcohol and oppression. This vision is a deliberate contrast to the image of the stereotypically traditional Irish family, so central to the construction of "a national, religious and political Irish identity in the 1980s" (92). Silvia Díez Fabre discusses domestic identity from a slightly but significantly different point of view in her analysis of Jennifer Johnston's *Two Moons* (1998). The three main characters in the novel seem to portray three very different paradigms of womanhood, representing three different stages in Irish history: from De Valera's Ireland to the Ireland of 1996, in which sexual identity can be more openly discussed and sexual freedom is a much more common reality. According to the author, the impossibility to express themselves makes the existence of secrecy to protect the unity of the family necessary.

National and personal crises are discussed in the fifth part of this book. Antonio José Couso Liañez studies a letter written by Joseph Sleigh to his children in his deathbed, *Good Advice and Counsel given forth by Joseph Sleigh of the City of Dublin, in the Time of Sickness to his Children* (1623). This letter represents a striking example of how a private epistle can be transformed into a conduct book, transcending the private sphere, to become a valuable example of its author's beliefs, thoughts, morals, the double crisis represented by his imminent death and the persecution of the Quakers throughout the seventeenth century (122). The Great Famine that devastated Ireland in the nineteenth century is studied by Purificación García Saéz, in her detailed discussion of the possible Irish origin of Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* (1847); a subject that has not been sufficiently addressed by critics. The author argues that Emily Brontë wanted to represent the social context of the time through the inclusion of Heathcliff as "an obvious personification of hunger" (133). María Gaviña Costero analyses the play *Volunteers* (1975) by Brian Friel in the last article of this section. According to Gaviña, the imagery of digging is used as a way of portraying the need to look into the past in order to understand the present (142). The prisoners who volunteered to help an excavation in

Dublin are related to the *Troubles* and are considered by their prison mates traitors, as their role was also to help the government. They face a double crisis: they are imprisoned for having being involved in the Troubles and they are going to be punished by those with whom they used to fight.

The sixth part of this collection is devoted to critical humour. Verónica Membrive thoroughly analyses Walter Starkie's account of the Easter Rising in his autobiography *Scholar and Gypsies* (1963). Starkie, who did not have a clear position as regards the political struggle, and who was a witness of the chaos during those days, extended his parody to both English and Irish decisions during the Rising (166). For her part, Munira H. Mutran deals with the relationship between a father and his son in Mark Doherty's *Trad* (2006), which portrays the tragic side of life from a comic and positive point of view, successfully expressed through their bizarre main characters.

The aesthetic approach to social crisis in modern and contemporary times is addressed in the seventh section of this book through the analysis of Samuel Beckett's *How It Is* (2009), Roddy Doyle's "Recuperation" (2011), Emer Martin's *Baby Zero* (2007), and poems by Eavan Boland, Mary O'Malley, Paula Meehan and Michael O'Loughlin. Paul Steward states in his analysis of *How it is* that pain and the process of being are closely related, "as if being meant to be in pain" (191). Burku Gülüm Tekin studies the inability of Mr Hanahoe's, the main character in "Recuperation", to adapt to the changes in his own life and his surroundings that Dublin is undergoing. The character seems to feel trapped in his dull and wearisome life and he even rejects being part of a new multicultural Dublin, full of new incomers. Aída Rosende Pérez carries out a detailed analysis of *Baby Zero* and deals with the problem of immigration blended with violence, loss, mourning, but, above all, the search for memory and identity and the impossibility of forgetting. The topic of a multicultural, ever changing Ireland is dealt with in the last article of this section. Pilar Villar-Argáiz analyses poems by Eavan Boland, Mary O'Malley, Paula Meehan and Michael O'Loughlin. The author distinguishes two ways of addressing the issue: by comparing Ireland's current immigration with Ireland's past as an emigrant country, or by taking a closer perspective to the immigrants, to the point of even sometimes "adopting the voice of the immigrant" (222). For her, Ireland's diversity can be acknowledged through the way Irish poets construct a more inclusive and complex idea of Irishness.

The eighth and last part of this book concludes with Peter Cunningham, as it started, as an ideal way of coming full circle. In this case, it is an interview conducted by Juan F. Elices Agudo in which several aspects of Cunningham's novels, especially *Capital Sins* (2010) and *The Taoiseach* (2004), are discussed. Satire, immigration, censorship, Ireland's financial crisis and its consequences are, amongst others, the topics raised in this conversation. These final personal reflections work as a direct and transparent way of bringing closer some of the most salient topics in the book.

As it has been argued above, in spite of its apparently initial ambitious purpose, this book constitutes a cohesive and consistent piece of work. The variety of topics addressed, the different genres in which Ireland's changing reality is reflected, and the wide range of perspectives and interpretations that can be found, makes this compilation of high quality research articles, a very valuable source of information for anyone interested in how Ireland and Irish artists confront crisis in different moments of history and how they deal with the transforming, sometimes blurring and complex, concept of Irishness.

Beatriz Rubio Martínez holds a BA in English and a BA in Comparative Literary Studies from the Universidad Complutense (Madrid), also a MA from the Universidad de Alcalá, where she is now completing her PhD thesis on the novels of Deirdre Madden. She has worked as a lecturer at the UNIR-Universidad Internacional de la Rioja since 2010 as part of

the English Department, in the Faculties of Education and Humanities, teaching for both undergraduate and master degrees. She has also been teaching at the National University of Ireland, Galway, since September 2014. Her research interests include Irish literature, interculturality, trauma studies and teaching languages through literature.

Family and Dysfunction in Contemporary Narrative and Film.

Marisol Morales-Ladrón (ed.)

Oxford and Bern: Peter Lang, 2016.

ISBN: 978-3-0343-2219-5

351 pages

Reviewer: **Pilar Villar-Argáiz**

The publication in 2013 of the edited collection *Voices, Inherited Lines: Literary and Cultural Representations of the Irish Family* gave a new impulse to the process of revisiting the trope of the family, an essential symbol and metaphor of the Irish nation, as reflected in nationalist discourse and literary and cultural representations of the country. Following the lead of this pioneering study, the recently published collection of essays *Family and Dysfunction in Contemporary Narrative and Film*, edited by Marisol Morales-Ladrón, participates in the process of critical reassessment of the role of the family in Irish cultural discourse, consequently filling an important gap in Irish studies. This collection brings together the recent research of leading scholars of Irish studies in Spain. The book offers a detailed examination of four decades of Irish writing and film, exploring the various ways in which the concepts of the family and the home have been construed and represented in Irish culture, topics not sufficiently explored before.

The collection of essays is comprehensive in many different ways. To start with, the list of fictional writings and films discussed is impressive. The book offers an exhaustive survey of contemporary artistic productions in Ireland, and thus it becomes an essential reference point nowadays for anyone interested in contemporary Irish culture. Secondly, one of the achievements of this monograph is its multidisciplinary nature. Each contributor approaches the theme of family dysfunction from his/her own respective field of expertise. In this way, Rosa González Casademont focuses on the Irish film industry, while Inés Praga Terente deals with Irish life-writings and Asier Altuna-García de Salazar centres on multicultural fiction. On their part Juan F. Elices examines the literary genre of satire and Marisol Morales-Ladrón centres on the field of contemporary women's writing. The consolidated trajectory that these critics have in the above-mentioned topics is a guarantee of the rigour and seriousness of the monograph itself.

The book opens with a long introduction which delineates the elusive meaning of the term "family" as articulated in Ireland throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. This preliminary chapter is updated in its inclusion of relevant bibliography on the matter and on its examination of recent sociological changes (i.e. secularisation, immigration, or the 2015 referendum on same-sex marriages) which have challenged, even more, the already unstable concept of the traditional Irish nuclear family, bringing up alternative family configurations.

After this, the book is structured into two parts. Section number one, entitled "Irish Narrative and Filmic Discourses of Dysfunction", is comprised of five long chapters which analyse the various ways in which family dysfunctionality has been portrayed in Irish culture since the last decades of the 20th century. Each chapter usefully begins with an abstract summarizing the main contents exposed in the subsequent pages. As evinced here, the essays draw on a wide range of critical views (ranging from literary criticism and trauma theory to

multicultural and transcultural approaches, among others), in their study of the trope of the Irish family, approaching this theme from an array of different perspectives.

The first chapter, by Marisol Morales-Ladrón, analyses the literature produced by Irish women writers since the 1980s in order to underscore different forms of dysfunction, ranging from incest, child abuse, and orphanage, to domestic violence, problematic parenting, and unconventional/abject motherhood. The chapter begins by offering an overview of the socio-historical evolution of the trope of the Irish family, concentrating on the implementation of new laws on contraception, abortion and divorce. After this, Morales-Ladrón concentrates on eight narratives which have been carefully selected as representative of each of the periods discussed: Julia O’Faolain’s *No Country for Young Men* (1980), Deirdre Madden’s *The Birds of the Innocent Wood* (1988), Lia Mill’s *Another Alice* (1996), Mary O’Donnell’s *The Elysium Testament* (1999), Anne Enright’s *The Gathering* (2007), Jennifer Johnston’s *Foolish Mortals* (2007), Claire Keegan’s *Foster* (2010), and Nuala Ní Chonchúir’s *You* (2010). While recognizing previous critical studies on these novels, this chapter is unique in its comparative analysis of literary texts rarely studied in conjunction and in its focus on the trope of the family, an issue rarely discussed with respect to these narratives. In most of the novels examined, Morales-Ladrón reveals how dysfunction appears in relation to the disclosure of a traumatic event in the past, which often involves pain, violence, a suffocating patriarchal context, and at times, the defence of new forms of family bonding. The author concludes by asserting that “the dysfunctional Irish family is not a new phenomenon of the last forty years, but a sign of identity of much of the literature published in Ireland in previous decades” (78). Chapters such as this constitute an important attempt to counteract the gender imbalance observed in many anthologies and literary compilations which still privilege the male perspective over the female one.

The following contribution by Inés Praga Terente examines the trope of the family and the different ways of revisiting home in relation to the literary genres of the Irish autobiographical novel and the memoir. After establishing a useful distinction between these two kinds of narratives, the author makes some preliminary reflections on the reliability/unreliability of memory, its subversive power as a narrative device and the concept of nostalgia in literature. Drawing on significant scholarship on these issues and on the work of iconic figures in Irish Studies such as Declan Kiberd, Gerry Smyth and Seamus Heaney, the author comments on the idiosyncratic nature of Irish literary autobiographies and memoirs, literary genres which are flourishing in the country, given the pressing need of some writers to establish “an imaginary home” and to reconstruct “an imaginary family” (97). In particular, Praga Terente focuses on the tropes of absent fathers and absent and unhappy mothers as perceived in these two genres. Within the first group of autobiographical novels, the author studies Patrick McCabe’s *The Butcher Boy* (1992), Hugo Hamilton’s *The Speckled People* (2004), and two novels by John Banville, *The Sea* (2005) and *Ancient Light* (2013). In these four narratives, the family nucleus is utterly fragile and violence appears as a predominant theme. Within the genre of memoirs, the author includes for examination John McGahern’s *Memoir* (2005), Edna O’Brien’s *Country Girl* (2012), Nuala O’Faolain’s *Are You Somebody?* (1996) and *Almost There* (2003), and Hugo Hamilton’s *Every Single Minute* (2014), this latter a form of autofiction which merges Hamilton’s memoir with that of O’Faolain. In these narratives, Praga Terente identifies recurrent family patterns constructed around the painful experiences of neglect and alienation. As persuasively argued in this study, home revisiting becomes a strategy that these writers share as a therapeutic exercise to (re)define the self and recover/reconstruct a lost sense of belonging.

The following chapter by Asier Altuna-García de Salazar approaches the theme of dysfunction as represented in a series of intercultural and multicultural novels published in the period 1980s-2010s. The author begins by reflecting on recent socio-economic factors which

have challenged the conventional vision of the family unit, in particular the arrival of what Fanning (2009: 1) calls “new guests of the Irish nation”. This chapter is innovative in its consideration of the multicultural and intercultural prisms as suitable approaches from which to study current Irish literary productions. In this way, family dysfunction is examined in relation to issues of race and ethnicity, in order to account for new themes which have emerged in recent texts produced in Ireland, such as citizenship issues, mixed-race marriages or the integration of immigrant communities. In particular, the chapter is pioneering in its defence of the incipient field of interculturality in Irish discourse, which, in contrast to multiculturalism (which has a longer tradition in Irish studies), has not been vindicated until recently with names such as Gavan Titley and Vera Sheridan. The essay is groundbreaking not only for its theoretical framework; Altuna-García de Salazar argues for an “inclusive approach” by studying Irish writers in conjunction with migrant writers and the so-called “New Irish” writers, a “one-dimensional perspective” (143) rarely carried out before. The fictional texts examined in this chapter include Hugo Hamilton’s *Hand in the Fire* (2019); Emer Martin’s *Baby Zero* (2007); Cauvery Madhavan’s *Paddy Indian* (2001); Margaret McCarthy’s *My Eyes Only Look Out. Experiences of Irish People of Mixed Race Parentage* (2001); Marsha Mehran’s *Pomegranate Soup* (2005) and *Rosewater and Soda Bread* (2008); and an ample selection of short stories from Emer Martin, Colm Toibín, Roddy Doyle, Mary O’Donnell, and Nena Bhandari. In particular, Altuna-García de Salazar studies how these writers offer a more fluid delineation of identity, interrogating traditional stereotypes of the Irish nuclear family and exploring alternative, unorthodox family structures constructed upon hyphenation and “the overall realities of a new global world” (172).

The contribution that follows, by Juan F. Elices, approaches dysfunctionality in a series of Irish novels which fall under the category of satire, namely Anne Haverty’s *One Day as a Tiger* (1998), Mark Macauley’s *The House of Slamming Doors* (2010) and Justin Quinn’s *Mount Merrion* (2013). The chapter begins with some useful general observations on the literary mode of satire, which Elices defines as a dysfunctional genre par excellence. After contextualizing the aforementioned novels in the wider framework of iconic satires such as Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Huxley’s *Brave New World*, the author offers an enlightening discussion of changing perspectives of family patterns in Ireland throughout the 20th and 21st centuries (a section which could have constituted a whole chapter in itself for its theoretical rigour and in-depth sociological analysis). As Elices demonstrates, the country’s social background emerges in the form of satire in Haverty’s, Macauley’s and Quinn’s novels, narratives in which the family appears as an important source of dysfunction. In particular, the author examines the causes of dysfunction in these novels, ranging from alcoholism and gender violence, to neglected parenthood, non-stereotypical mothers, and troublesome youths. The author’s authoritative reading of these recent Irish novels in the context of canonical texts in the tradition of satirical and dystopian literature (i.e. Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* or Orwell’s *Animal Farm*) reinforces the dysfunctional nature of these texts. His analysis also skilfully reveals the many different ways in which Irish satirists (from Swift to the present) have distanced themselves from idealized portraits of the nuclear Catholic family, offering alternative forms of family bonding.

The final chapter in this section by Rosa González Casademont examines cinematic representations of the concepts of home and the family. As González Casademont reveals, mainstream feature films seldom deal with those disruptive factors (i.e. incest, domestic violence, emigration) that have weakened the traditional family structure, while indigenous films tend to portray more accurately family dysfunctionality. The author follows a thematic, rather than chronological, criteria in her analysis of a wide corpus of films from the period 1980s-2010s (an impressive number of 66 films in total), focusing on key aspects such as the demystification of rural pastoral Ireland, the reconfiguration of traditional stereotypes of

motherhood, and the tropes of the absent, ineffective or abusive father, among other themes. After considering a series of extra- and para-cinematic aspects which affect the industrial side of film production and consumption, González Casademont offers an in-depth analysis of cases of family dysfunctionality in a series of commercial films and others with a more limited commercial distribution. Towards the end of her chapter, the author makes a convincing critique of Celtic Tiger comedies which, with a few exceptions, fail to deal with the social tensions and the contemporary realities of exclusion and family dysfunction in 21st century Ireland. González Casademont finishes by offering an extended reading of a case study film, *Eamon* (2009), a low-budget film which has received very little critical attention, despite its powerful engagement with the decay of the traditional Irish family. In its exhaustive list of films discussed and in its well-sustained use of critical references, this chapter provides one of the most comprehensive discussions of contemporary Irish cinema nowadays. It is also highly innovative in its comparative study of well-known films in conjunction with others rarely discussed before (such as *Come on Eileen*, 2010).

These five essays are followed by a final section in the volume which includes three interviews with authors and film directors for whom the trope of the family plays a central role in their work: Emer Martin, Jim Sheridan and Kirsten Sheridan. In different ways, these artists represent important challenges to received assumptions on the role of the traditional Irish family. As shown in these interviews, the concept of the nuclear Catholic family is a fiction which sustained the rhetoric of Irish nationhood and Catholicism, but which found no correspondence neither in the reality of the country nor in most of its cultural output.

All in all, this book offers a sustained focus on the cultural representation of the concepts of home and family in Ireland. After reading this study, one cannot but conclude that the trope of the dysfunctional family is so common in 20th century Irish literature and film that it becomes the norm and not the exception. Morales-Ladrón's sustained and meticulous edition provides enlightening analyses on the work of well-known and not so well-known artists in Ireland, revealing the disruptive force of culture when debilitating ideal constructions of Irishness. It is thus an essential and valuable contribution for anyone interested not only in familial dysfunction but also in any aspect of Irish Studies.

Works Cited

- Fanning, Bryan. 2009. *New Guests of the Irish Nation*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press.
- O'Keefe, Yvonne, and Claudia Reese, eds. 2013. *Voices, Inherited Lines: Literary and Cultural Representations of the Irish Family*. Reimagining Ireland Series (Vol. 47). Oxford: Peter Lang.

Pilar Villar-Argáiz is a Senior Lecturer of British and Irish Literatures in the Department of English Philology at the University of Granada. She is the author of the books *Eavan Boland's Evolution as an Irish Woman Poet: An Outsider within an Outsider's Culture* (The Edwin Mellen Press, 2007) and *The Poetry of Eavan Boland: A Postcolonial Reading* (Academica Press, 2008). She has published extensively on contemporary Irish poetry and fiction, in relation to questions of gender, race, migration and interculturality. Her edited collections include *Literary Visions of Multicultural Ireland: The Immigrant in Contemporary Irish Literature* (Manchester University Press, 2014), the special issue of *Irish Studies Review* (entitled "Irish Multiculturalism in Crisis", co-edited with Jason King, 2015), and the special issue of *Nordic Irish Studies* (entitled "Discourses of Inclusion and Exclusion: Artistic Renderings of Marginal Identities in Ireland", 2016). Her research has been published in numerous peer-reviewed journals of her field such as *New Hibernia Review*, *Irish University*

Review, Contemporary Women's Writing (Oxford Journal), An Sionnach, Estudios Irlandeses and *Études Irlandaises*, among others. In March 2010, she was awarded by her University with the Prize of Outstanding Research for young researchers in the field of Humanities. Villar-Argáiz is currently a member of the board of AEDEI (Spanish Association of Irish Studies). She is now working on the poetry of Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin and is editing a monograph for Palgrave Macmillan, entitled *Irishness on the Margins: Minority and Dissident Identities*.

Traducciones.

M^a Yolanda Fernández Suárez (tr. and ed.)

Madrid: Publicación de la Asociación de Directores de Escena de España, 2016.

ISBN: 978-84-92639-81-6

240 pages

Reviewer: **Ana M^a Terrazas-Calero**

Yolanda Fernández Suárez's *Traducciones* skillfully brings to the attention of Spanish readers world-renowned playwright Brian Friel, by prefacing her version of *Translations* (1980) with a detailed introduction to his life and literary production which, although perhaps unnecessary for a non-specialist audience as the book focuses on one play, serves to familiarize the readers with his dramatic artistry. Furthermore, Fernández Suárez also enhances their experience of reading *Translations* by providing them with detailed information about the political, historical and cultural context that served as a backdrop for this play, as well as with reflections on its reception in Spain. The reading of this version of the play is further enriched and made more comprehensive by the final appendixes which contain glossaries with detailed information about the classical references mentioned in the play, as well as about the Irish cultural terms and anthroponyms that are such a central part of the book.

Translations is a three-act play set in the fictional, Irish-speaking town of Baile Beag, Co. Donegal, in 1833. The plot, which takes place in a hedge school, examines the complexities of imperialistic colonization and the devastating effects on the language and identity of the colonized by portraying a small town community whose quiet life is about to be disrupted by the imminent introduction of the colonial National School system and the arrival of two imperial officers tasked with the recharting and renaming of the land.

In the section "Traducciones: elementos históricos", Fernández Suárez explains in depth what she considers to be the three historical triggers that set off the events portrayed in the play, thus making it easier for a reader who is unfamiliar with Irish history to understand the plotline. She refers to the Anglicization of Irish toponyms, which is being performed in the play by Captain Lancey and Lieutenant Yolland, both of whom she describes as being representatives of the colonial power, as the first event. She also presents the instauration of the National School system, which made education and the use of English as a vehicular language compulsory, thus relegating the role of the Gaelic language, as the second trigger, while the ghost of the Famine, which would decimate the Irish population and lead to a massive exodus, looms throughout the play as the third.

Despite clearly portraying the historical and political atmosphere of the period, Fernández Suárez interestingly remarks upon Friel's desire to distance *Translations* from a political context while turning it into an advocate of the importance and power of language, an idea prevalent in George Steiner's lingo-philosophical treatise, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*. The tremendous influence of this treatise on Friel's play, which is described in this book as a dramatization of Steiner's book, is brilliantly illustrated in

Fernández Suárez's introduction, where she provides the readers with extracts from Friel's diaries, while also making in-text references to indicate parallelisms between some scenes and Steiner's ideas, which are expanded on in Appendix III; a part of the book that, despite being informative, could be confusing for non-academic readers as it shows quotations from Steiner's book, yet those quotations are not explained.

The driving theme in *Translations* is Steiner's notion of the importance of language as a core element for the construction of national identity, in this case, Ireland's, as it is the medium through which the environment is reflected, and appears in the play in different ways:

Owen.- Descubrirá, señor, que ciertas culturas despliegan en su vocabulario y sintaxis ambiciosas energías y refinamientos de los que su vida cotidiana carece por completo.

Hugh.- Pero recuerde que las palabras son señales. ... No son inmortales. Y puede ocurrir ... que una civilización se halle presa de un entorno lingüístico que ya no se adecue al paisaje de... la realidad.

Owen.- ... Ponemos nombre a algo y ¡zas! ¡cobra vida de golpe!

In the introduction to her book, Fernández Suárez reflects on the fact that the resonance of this idea with political issues in Spanish territories such as Catalonia or the Basque Country may have been the reason this play was originally translated into Catalan and Euskera, and not into Spanish. Furthermore, one of the clearest topics in the book is perhaps the representation of the process of translation as the event that triggers miscommunications between both cultures and a subsequent loss of identity.

Lancey.- Esta ingente tarea ha sido abordada con el objetivo de equipar al estamento militar con información rigurosa y actualizada sobre todos los rincones de esta parte del imperio.

Owen.- El trabajo lo realizan soldados porque están cualificados para esta tarea.

Lancey.- Y también para poder calcular de nuevo la base completa de la tasación del terreno con el propósito de imponer un sistema tributario más equitativo.

Owen.- Este nuevo mapa sustituirá al mapa del agente de la propiedad para que desde ahora sepáis con exactitud lo que os pertenece por ley.

...

Manus.- ¿Qué clase de traducción fue ésa, Owen?

Owen.- ¿Metí la pata?

Manus.- ¡No estabas diciendo lo que Lancey estaba diciendo!

Owen.- “La incertidumbre del significado es poesía en ciernes”-¿Quién dijo eso?

Even though these lingo-philosophical notions are central to the play, the linguistically complex nature of *Translation* poses a real challenge for translators. It is a multilingual play, with Latin and Greek references, which is to be understood as being performed in Irish and English, while being fully written in English and while presenting communication breakdowns between the characters. Despite this paradoxical element, Friel masterfully represents the conveyance of sociolinguistic information inherent to language use by distinguishing the Irish characters from the English ones. Thus, the Irish-speaking characters use Irish English, a dialect that has traditionally been associated with low-class, illiterate

speakers, while the English officers use formal Standard English, a variety linked with educated people. In translating this play, Fernández Suárez ran the risk of losing that juxtaposition and the distinct vernacular used by the Irish English-speaking characters, yet she managed to successfully extrapolate this linguistic nuance into Spanish by converting the vernacular, Irish English expressions of Baile Beag's citizens into vernacular Spanish, while having the English characters speak standard and formal Spanish.

While vernacular grammatical features of Irish English such as the use of embedded questions or the lack of a relative pronoun which pepper the play were not translated, Fernández Suárez made a big effort to translate aspects that are difficult to convey in a different language. For instance, she converted dialectal words into non-standard Spanish words, as in the case of *orujo casero* (poteen), *viejo* (aul), or *wee*, which is interpreted as a diminutive with Spanish nouns such as in *el tontaina* (the wee get), or *los pueblecitos* (the wee villages). It is necessary to mention her skillful translation of the popular Irish English discourse marker *sure* in clause initial position, which is used throughout the play to reinforce a statement, and which she translates in a variety of ways (i.e. *seguro*, *desde luego*, *la verdad es que...*, *por supuesto*, etc.), as exemplified in: *Desde luego mejor que la tengáis vosotros que no ese ternero negro* (Sure it's better you have it than that black calf).

The use of taboo language and religious expressions, which is a highly popular linguistic feature in Irish English that appears all over the play, is another complicated feature to translate, as these words convey a specific intensity depending on the context they are used in. However, despite the complexity of extrapolating the shocking value of these words into a different language, Fernández Suárez masterfully resorts to vernacular Spanish equivalents such as *¡válgame Dios!* for vernacular *Be Jasus* and *Be God*, or, among others, *Bendito sea Dios* instead of the more standard *Jesus!*. The translation of taboo words in this book is also praiseworthy as she succeeds in conveying the correct amount of intensity into the Spanish taboo words, depending on the context they were used in the original text. Thus, *bastard* can act as *cabrón*, as in *Temía que algún cabrón de vosotros se fuese a reír*, or as the stronger *hijo de puta* in *Yolland, eres un hijo de puta*. The same applies to *bloody*, which is translated with various degrees of intensification as its shocking value augments in English, as in *es cojonuda* (bloody marvelous), *maldito, maldito imbécil* (bloody, bloody fool), *Owen, ¡es una jodida operación military!* (It's a bloody military operation, Owen!), or *¡Joder!, ¡Joder!, ¡Maldita sea!* (bloody, bloody, bloody hell!).

Finally, the implicit advocacy for the process of translation to become the means by which a different culture and identity is to be understood and respected and not obliterated that takes place in this metaphorical play has been clearly achieved in Fernández Suárez's commendable book. *Traducciones* is not only a means to linguistically understand Friel's play, but, through its detailed, albeit at times excessive, contextualization of the original text and the historical context it was set in, it becomes the medium through which the Spanish readership can become better acquainted with Irish culture.

Ana M^a Terrazas-Calero is a doctoral student at Mary Immaculate College (Limerick) and at the University of Extremadura (Spain), which is where she also obtained an MA degree in Academic Research and a BA in English Studies. Her doctoral dissertation focuses on literary Irish English, the representation of Irish voice in literature, contemporary Irish English fiction, and stylistics.